

**NATIONAL
WEATHER
SERVICE,
ALBUQUERQUE**



**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

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The Radio Room: *Are you a HAM Radio Operator? Would you like to become one? Read a special message from Tim on how to become involved!*

Replanting Las Conchas: *National Weather Service chips in at a replanting event at Las Conchas., an area devastated by wildfire nearly 2 years ago.*

Meet Your Observers: *We recognize our outstanding observers with length of service awards..*

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New Mexico

Skywatcher

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Staying Plugged-in to the NWS

As we roll out the Spring Edition of the New Mexico Skywatcher we turn our focus toward service and preparedness. This newsletter is not only a source of news and information from your National Weather Service forecast office in Albuquerque, but it is also a platform to proudly express our gratitude for the service that our partners and stakeholders provide. We have a growing cast of bright and supportive people outside of our office that share our vision of public service for the Land of Enchantment.

Whether it's our numerous cooperative observers continuously volunteering to record daily weather data, our dedicated emergency managers meticulously planning and staying in a prepared state of mind, or the many SKYWARN spotters that keep additional eyes on the skies when threatening weather approaches, all of these assets play a vital role to the mission of the National Weather Service. That mission, to protect life and property from hazardous weather, depends on an expansive array of partnerships. We want to thank all who partake in these day-to-day activities and services to help us carry out our objective of ensuring that New Mexico is "Weather-Ready".

Being "Weather-Ready" is what keeps you, your families, and community in-tune with current weather and any ongoing hazards or inclement conditions. Individuals and communities that are Weather-Ready have a sense of preparedness when severe weather strikes, and they also learn to manage the associated impacts while building a resilience to these events when they happen. The National Weather Service and our parent agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), are continuously performing internal modifications and en-

hancements that allow us to distribute the valuable weather information that is necessary to building Weather-Ready communities. Beyond this, many other actions from outside partners such as emergency managers, observers, researchers, spotters, media, and the private sector are required for an efficient system that keeps data and information flowing through the community.

How can you ensure that you are Weather-Ready? The simple act of visiting our website is a great start. At www.weather.gov/abq you will find a wealth of information regarding current weather conditions, forecasts, and specialized statements on any hazardous weather. Maybe you have a preferred media outlet that you receive your weather information from; staying tuned-in to these sources ensures you will be abreast of the latest information available. Maybe you have a social media addiction; our office has active accounts on Facebook and Twitter where we share a wide spectrum of information from trivial weather facts to life-saving warnings. Another means to the most pertinent weather information is via Wireless Emergency Alerts. Check out page 4 for more details on this technological breakthrough, and stay tuned to subsequent editions of this newsletter for more information on being Weather-Ready.

Author: Todd Shoemake

**Are you involved in Social Media? Check us out
Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.**



Co-op Corner

COOPERATIVE OBSERVER SERVICE AWARDS:

- **Gran Quivira
National Monument
75 Years of Service**
- **El Morro
National Monument
75 Years of Service**
- **Beaverhead
Ranger Station
75 Years of Service**
- **Navajo Dam
50 Years of Service**
- **Tom and Hilda Kelly
Kelly Ranch
55 Years of Service**
- **Editha Bartley
Gascon
50 Years of Service**
- **Jerry Sanchez
Cerro
35 Years of Service**
- **Sam Hitt
Santa Fe 2
25 Years of Service**
- **Mike and Delrae Kelly
Rienhardt Ranch
20 Years of Service**
- **Georgia Overlander
Moriarty
15 Years of Service**

———— A MESSAGE TO OUR COOPERATIVE OBSERVERS ————

Happy Spring!!! As the chilly winter nights have given way to afternoon winds we would like to remind our observers of some necessary changes as we transition from snow to rain.

For those of you with a standard 8-inch rain gauge, it's time to place the inner measuring tube and funnel inside the gauge. This will make observing easier and ensure the most accurate measurements by preventing moisture inside the gauge from evaporating (pictured below).



As we head into our summer thunderstorm/monsoon season and *hopefully* get some rain, you can be of great assistance to the National Weather Service in Albuquerque by reporting severe weather conditions, as well as rainfall totals in your area. Please report any sightings of funnel clouds, wall clouds, tornadoes, strong winds, wind damage, hail, or flooding to our office at 1-888-386-7637. Your information will help forecasters make life saving decisions and verify warnings. Please don't forget to enter this information on your B91, B92, or B83a forms as well.

We are still continuing our effort to go paperless with our coop observations. "Going paperless" means you will enter your temperature and precipitation readings in an online form (either WXCODERIII or IV-ROCS) and will no longer need to mail in a paper form after the end of every month. From the online site we are able to access the data here at the office, and it is directly downloaded to the National Climatic Data Center, cutting out the wait for the mail to arrive with the forms as well as postage costs to send out supplies. We do realize that some stations will not be able to go paperless for various reasons. If we haven't contacted you already about getting you onto one of the above websites we will be soon. Please bear with us as we are no longer being given a substantial enough postage allowance to continue to mail out observation materials.



IV-ROCS Telephone Instructions

IV-ROCS
Interactive Voice –
Remote Observation Collection System

The new Cooperative Program data acquisition system,
(IV-ROCS) (pronounced "ivy rocks"), is now available

As always, we appreciate your continued service to the National Weather Service and thank you for sticking with us as we weather the budget storm!

Author: Amanda Martin

Peggy Williams Retires

After more than 40 years at the Albuquerque National Weather Service office, Peggy Williams stepped foot into retirement this past January. To say that Peggy had a long tenure with the local National Weather Service is indeed an understatement. Peggy endured six different bosses, an office relocation, several renovations, and four decades of exponential technological growth. In fact, she began working when there was no National Weather Service, but rather the “Weather Bureau”.



Peggy, in her early days at the Weather Service, March 1970.



Peggy was usually the first one you saw when entering the NWS office, welcoming you with a smile.

Staying within Albuquerque throughout her long career, Peggy served the weather forecast office in countless administrative ways. Nobody could possibly recite all of the duties that Peggy performed for the NWS, but suffice it to say that she performed them all with a work ethic second to none. Peggy believed in protocol and doing things “by-the-book”. Whether it was drafting travel authorization forms, ensuring all employees were paid in a timely manner, or purchasing supplies for the office, all these tasks were performed with the utmost precision. It was rumored that Peggy’s favorite tool was a fine-tooth comb that she used to meticulously groom every administrative task assigned to her.

In the few months since Peggy has retired, the staff at the weather forecast office in Albuquerque have become painfully aware of what a vital asset she was. As a whole team of staff members frantically struggle to “fill in” for Peggy, the entire office remains bewildered without her guidance. She was undoubtedly efficient, knowledgeable, and irreplaceable. Exhibiting a cheery attitude, even during the most demanding circumstances, Peggy has been a cornerstone to our office, always offering a welcoming smile, a friendly hug, or a chirpy tune that was whistled better than any songbird could dream. We wish Peggy well as she starts this new chapter of life with her husband, Gilbert.

Ed Polasko Retires

The weather forecast office in Albuquerque had to say farewell to another valuable staff member in early March as Ed Polasko also embarked on his journey into retirement. Ed was the Service Hydrologist for New Mexico, providing hydrological expertise and a wealth of related scientific knowledge to local weather forecasters, regional river forecasters, land management officials, and media partners. Continuously engaged with weather, climate, water resource, and geographical data, Ed possessed an unrivaled familiarity with New Mexico and ceaseless insight on temperature and precipitation regimes.

Having graduated from Penn State University, Ed had a fruitful career of more than 40 years in meteorology and hydrology. Prior to the personal computing age, Ed had his hands busy managing the standardized National Weather Service computer system that replaced the aging teletype network. Later as part of the Center Weather Service Unit, Ed spent time at the Federal Aviation Administration’s Air Route Traffic Control Center in Albuquerque where he provided daily weather briefings for air traffic controllers and other aviation personnel. In 1994 Ed re-joined the weather forecast office, and soon began to tend to the weather surveillance radar during the deployment of the next generation radar network. These and countless other weather and climate related tasks helped shape the vast knowledgebase and experience level that Ed obtained. By the time he was promoted to Service Hydrologist, he had acquired a great understanding of New Mexico and the intricacies of state drought and floods.



Ed Polasko was considered “all things weather and water” in New Mexico.

Ed participated in numerous media interviews, task force meetings, and tabletop exercises, ensuring that New Mexico partners and stakeholders were well-informed on New Mexico’s hydrometeorological status. The weather forecast office has struggled to cope with the absence of Ed’s humor, wit, wisdom, and experience. We wish Ed and his family nothing but happiness and blessings during his retirement.

Author: Todd Shoemaker

The Radio Room

As our SKYWARN training schedule swings into gear for the summer, I am pleased to report that amateur radio is alive and well here at the National Weather Service in Albuquerque.

Although it all seems a far cry from the days when I built my bread-board circuits and saw the warm glow of the vacuum tubes as I sent CW far into those nights long ago, modern ham radio is all about communications in the modern way. So many hams have embraced modern communication, and it makes me as warm as those vacuum tubes to see so many ham calls showing up on lists of APRSWXNET and CWOP weather stations. This is information we can really use, and I'm delighted to see ham radio operators in the vanguard of the information revolution. Don't want to install that weather equipment? No problem.

Take a SKYWARN class and join our corps of weather spotters. Day in and day out, our spotters keep their eyes on the sky on behalf of the Weather Service. This is true community service in the highest sense, and we all pledge to serve our communities in exchange for the grants of frequencies and bandwidth we use every day. Keep up the good work - see you around the bands!

73 de Tim KM4KS, Trustee WX5ABQ



Comet Pan-STARRS
photographed March
12, 2013 by Darren
Brown.

Wireless Emergency Alerts

Last summer, you or someone you know may have received a special text message on a mobile device indicating *"Flash Flood Warning in this area until 4:15PM MDT. Check local media NWS."* This text-like message is the new Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) (pronounced "wee"), also known as Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS). WEA, which was officially launched in April 2012, is a national emergency alert system to automatically send concise, text-like messages to users' WEA-capable mobile device. Wireless providers representing nearly 97 percent of subscribers are participating in distributing wireless emergency alerts at no additional cost. *The purpose of WEA is to provide an increasingly mobile American public with a free and fast way to receive critically important information.*

Alerts received at the right time can help keep you safe during an emergency. With WEA, alerts can be sent to your mobile device when you may be in harm's way, without need to download an app or subscribe to a service. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities through your mobile carrier. Government partners include local and state public safety agencies, FEMA, the FCC, the Department of Homeland Security, and your local National Weather Service.

What types of alerts will I receive?

Currently, the following NWS warnings are included in WEA: Tsunami Warnings, Tornado and Flash Flood Warnings, Hurricane and Typhoon Warnings, Dust Storm and Extreme Wind Warnings, as well as Blizzard and Ice Storm Warnings. Additionally, AMBER Alerts and Presidential Alerts during a national emergency are included. You may reside in New Mexico, but receiving a Tsunami Warning on your mobile device could save your life in another part of the country.

What does a WEA message look like?

WEA will look like a text message. The WEA message will show the type and time of the alert, any action you should take, and the agency issuing the alert. The message will be no more than 90 characters.



Wireless Emergency Alerts cont.

How will I know the difference between WEA and a regular text message?

WEA messages include a special tone and vibration, both repeated twice.

Will I receive a WEA message if I'm visiting an area where I don't live, or outside the area where my phone is registered?

Yes, if you have a WEA-capable phone and your wireless carrier participates in the program. For information about which mobile devices are WEA-capable and carrier participation, please visit <http://www.ctia.org/wea> or contact your wireless carrier. If you travel into a threat area after an alert is first sent, your WEA-capable device will receive the message when you enter the area.

When will I start receiving WEA messages?

It depends. WEA use began in the spring of 2012, but many mobile devices, especially older ones, are not WEA-capable. When you buy a new mobile device, it probably will be able to receive WEA messages. For information about which mobile devices are WEA-capable, please visit <http://www.ctia.org/wea> or contact your wireless carrier.

Is this the same service public safety agencies have asked the public to register for?

No, but they are complementary. Local agencies may have asked you to sign up to receive telephone calls, text messages, or emails. Those messages often include specific details about a critical event. WEA are very short messages designed to get your attention in an emergency situation. They may not give all the details you receive from other notification services.

Will I be charged for receiving WEA messages?

No. This service is offered for free by wireless carriers. WEA messages will not count towards texting limits on your wireless plan.

Does WEA know where I am? Is it tracking me?

No. Just like emergency weather alerts you see on local TV, WEA are broadcast from area cell towers to mobile devices in the area. Every WEA-capable phone within range receives the message, just like every TV shows the emergency weather alert if it is turned on. TV stations, like WEA, don't know exactly who is tuned in.

Will a WEA message interrupt my phone conversations?

No, the alert will be delayed until you finish your call.

How often will I receive WEA messages?

You may receive frequent WEA messages during an emergency. Message frequency depends on the number of imminent threats to life or property in your area.

If, during an emergency, I can't make or receive calls or text messages due to network congestion, will I still be able to receive a WEA message?

Yes, WEA messages are not affected by network congestion.

What if I don't want to receive WEA messages?

You can opt-out of receiving WEA messages for imminent threats and AMBER alerts, but not for Presidential messages. To opt out, please refer to instructions from your wireless carrier or visit <http://www.ctia.org/wea> for more information.

How will I receive alerts if I don't have a WEA-capable device?

WEA is one of many ways you can receive emergency notifications. Other sources include NOAA Weather Radio, news media coverage, the Emergency Alert System on radio and TV broadcasts, social media, and other alerting methods offered by local and state public safety agencies. Your best use of WEA is to immediately seek additional information about the imminent threat impacting your area.

Author: Kerry Jones

Meet Your Observers: Award Recognitions

Throughout the year the Co-op Team at the National Weather Service in Albuquerque recognizes many of their observers for their outstanding work. Not only have individuals from the public volunteered their time to take daily weather observations but some institutions have as well. We are proud of the service you provide our nation, and we want to acknowledge your hard work.

-Institutions-

Jemez Springs

Jemez State Monument located in mountainous terrain along the Jemez River in northwest New Mexico was recently recognized for 25 years of service as an institution. Joshua Maldonado (pictured right) has been diligently retrieving and recording daily temperatures along with precipitation measurement for the NWS in ABQ.



Mr. Lonny Bacon (left) receiving a 20yr length of service award for the Raton Filter Plant.

Bloomfield



William Field Services, Kutz Plant, an oil/gas extraction plant in Bloomfield New Mexico was also recently recognized by the NWS in ABQ for 25 years of service as a cooperative weather observer for north-west NM. Many workers from the Kutz plant take turns taking weather observations throughout the year. Pictured to the left are a few of the workers who volunteer their time to the co-op program at NWS ABQ.

-Individuals-

Cubero

Mrs. Elizabeth Desoto was recognized in mid-December for 25 years of service as a volunteer weather observer at Cubero. Mrs. Desoto is one of 42 sites across the state that has a special electronic precipitation measuring gauge. We thank her for contributing her time and observations!



Corona

Rogene and Sandra Alford have been taking observations in Corona for twenty years! Not only have they been compiling daily temperature and precipitation data to send to the NWS, they also take aviation observations with special weather service equipment. They provide the NWS in Albuquerque, as well as the nation, with important climate information for this location. They will also be recognized with an additional aviation award later this year. Thank you Mr. & Mrs.



Author: Amanda Martin

Replanting Las Conchas

On Friday April 12, 2013 members from the NWS ABQ office volunteered their time to plant Douglas fir seedlings in the Santa Fe National Forest in the Las Conchas burn scar area.

In the summer of 2011 the Las Conchas fire was started in the Santa Fe National Forest, near the city of Los Alamos, when a tree fell into a power line. The first day was the most destructive as the fire was fueled by strong and sporadic winds burning 43,000 acres. Throughout its 1 ½ month run, the fire destroyed multiple structures and caused evacuations as it threatened a National Laboratory. The fire scorched a total of 156,293 acres and became the largest wildfire in New Mexico state history at that time.

Wildfires are sadly common in New Mexico, especially in more recent years as drought has continuously plagued the state. The Albuquerque office has a designated fire weather desk and the office, as a whole, can get very busy during the fire season and subsequent monsoon season as flooding becomes a big issue over burn scars.



Figure 2 : Newley planted Douglas Fir Seedling with safety netting.

Many employees from the NWS ABQ office have been around to see their fair share of destruction from wildfires and jumped at the chance to give back.

During the morning hours of Friday April 12, 2013, eight office volunteers joined the Forestry Service and many other volunteers. After a short safety briefing and hike into the Jemez Mountains north of the Pajarito Ski Area, we received instructions and began planting Douglas fir seedlings.

Armed with a digging tool, the dibble bar, bags of seedlings, netting and bamboo sticks we headed into the woods. The dibble bar made the digging much easier and had markings for the correct planting depth. The bamboo sticks were used to weave through the netting and stick over the newly planted trees to protect the trees from hungry animals, as tree seedlings are particularly tasty to Elk, which are very prevalent in the area.



Figure 1: WCM Kerry Jones, Lead Brian Guyer and Intern Jason Frazier hiking up to planting location.



Figure 3 : NWS ABQ planting crew from L to R: Deirdre Kann, Race Cowgil, Tony Camacho (kneeling), David Craft, Brian Guyer, Amanda Martin, Kerry Jones and Jason Frazier.

With the crew scattered across various terrain ranging from a steep slope to flat surface just off trail, we spent the next three and a half hours planting approximately 400 seedlings. Another 1000 were planted by additional volunteers that day. With only a 40% chance survival rate many of the seedlings we planted will not make it due to weather and animals, but the ones that do, will become great forest trees in the next 10-15 years.

Everyone had fun and we are glad we had the opportunity to give back to the state and especially our forest!

Authors: Amanda Martin

By The Numbers

The 2012–2013 winter season brought mostly below normal snowfall, similar to the 2011–2012 winter season. Let's take a look at the top five snowfall totals from our Cooperative Observers:

| Location | Snowfall (Oct.-March) | Co-op Observer |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Red River | 102.0 inches | Cathy Lexa |
| Chama | 96.5 inches | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation |
| Wolf Canyon | 96.0 inches | Carolyn Melgard |
| Angel Fire | 71.0 inches | City Hall |
| Eagle Nest | 51.5 inches | Ernest Sutliff |

Much of the 2012–2013 winter had above normal temperatures once again, although January was below normal over most of the state. The first half of January 2013 was particularly cold with numerous record lows on the morning of the 15th. The four coldest spots for this past winter season are listed below:

| Location | Temperature | Co-op Observer |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Eagle Nest | -35 °F | Ernest Sutliff |
| Angel Fire | -30 °F | City Hall |
| Dulce | -27 °F | BIA - Forestry |
| El Vado Dam | -25 °F | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation - Chama |
| Wolf Canyon | -24 °F | Carolyn Melgard |

Author: Chuck Jones

Fresh snow blankets the Clear Creek Campground in the Jemez Mountains on New Years Day 2013. Photo courtesy of Mike Weaver



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Would you like to receive notice of future issues?

The New Mexico Skywatcher will be available on your NWS website at <http://www.weather.gov/abq>. If you would like to be notified of new issues via email, submit your request to sr-abq.webmaster@noaa.gov (make sure to state your name and email address).